

OCTOBER 11, 2000

**SCHAKOWSKY CALLS HOUSE FAILURE TO PASS HATE CRIMES BILL
A "LOST OPPORTUNITY"**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Calling it a "lost opportunity," U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today expressed disappointment following the House's failure to pass legislation strengthening federal hate crimes law. A provision strengthening hate crimes law was included in a Senate bill to authorize funding for the Department of Defense. However, the provision was removed from the final bill that passed today by the House of Representatives.

Below is Schakowsky's statement.

"It is shameful to me that we could adjourn the 106th Congress without having strengthened our federal hate crimes law to protect victims who are chosen because of their gender, sexual orientation or disability and to allow federal prosecutors to pursue hate-crime cases if local authorities refuse to press charges."

"Unfortunately, hate violence is becoming an all too common occurrence in our communities. That an individual could be so filled with rage for his or her fellow human being is unthinkable-but it has happened in small towns and big cities across this nation and it will continue to happen, until and unless we stand up to bigotry and hate by ensuring that the civil rights of all people are protected. The expanded hate crimes legislation that was included in the Senate Defense Authorization bill was just that kind of tool."

"The defeat of expanded hate crimes legislation ignores overwhelming public support for this critical civil rights legislation. Since 1998 when an African American man was tied to the back of a truck and dragged to death by white supremacists in Jasper, Texas, several high profile hate crimes have continued to shock our country, including a hate based killing spree that profoundly touched my community during July 4th celebrations in 1999."

"I am proud to represent one of the most diverse districts in America and I will continue to stand with my constituents against bigotry and hate and actively work to expand and improve the federal hate crimes law. We cannot and we should not leave Washington without ensuring that the civil rights of all Americans are honored and protected."